

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 17, 2004

SENATE BILL

No. 1226

Introduced by Senator Machado
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Wiggins and Wolk)

February 11, 2004

An act to add Section 425.10 to the Government Code, relating to state grass.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1226, as amended, Machado. State grass.

Existing law declares the official state animal, rock, mineral, and bird, among other official things.

This bill would make purple needlegrass, or *Nassella pulchra*, the official state grass.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby finds and declares all of
2 the following:
3 (a) *Nassella pulchra*, or purple needlegrass as it is commonly
4 known, is the most extensive and widespread native perennial
5 ~~grass~~ *bunchgrass* found in the state, with a range extending from
6 the Oregon border into northern Baja California.
7 (b) The seed of this grass species was one of several used by
8 many California Native American communities as a food ~~source~~
9 ~~for humans and wildlife.~~ *source. It remains an important food*
10 *source for wildlife.*

1 (c) During the period of Mexican control of California, ~~the~~
2 *Nassella pulchra* was used for cattle grazing to support the huge
3 cowhide and tallow industry. Today, *Nassella pulchra* continues to
4 provides forage for California's important cattle industry.

5 (d) The deep root systems of this grass support the survival of
6 young oak trees by promoting mycorrhizal fungi, which ~~is~~ *are*
7 important to their health. ~~Because of its long life, it~~ *With a lifespan*
8 *of up to 100 years, Nassella pulchra* provides food for more than
9 330 terrestrial species of life.

10 (e) Once established, ~~the~~ *Nassella pulchra* helps repel the
11 invasion of weeds and has been used for numerous restoration
12 projects such as establishing ~~habitats~~ *a specific habitat* for fauna,
13 erosion control, and ~~for stormwater containment levees~~
14 *stormwater containment levees*. It is hardy, drought resistant,
15 desirable forage to livestock, and easily recognizable.

16 (f) ~~The~~ *Nassella pulchra* burns more slowly than flash-burning
17 annual stubble and speeds postfire recovery *of burned habitat*.

18 (g) Because the *Nassella pulchra* is native to California, many
19 who work with native plants and habitat restoration have already
20 informally named this species as the state grass.

21 (h) With new species of exotic grasses and weeds emerging
22 everyday, it is important to recognize ~~the~~ *Nassella pulchra* as a
23 symbol of the heritage, splendor, and *natural* diversity found in the
24 early days of California.

25 (i) ~~The~~ *Nassella pulchra* is used as a teaching tool as a symbol
26 of the natural environment of early California, and protecting the
27 history of ~~the~~ *Nassella pulchra* is essential to safeguarding this
28 precious resource and enhancing grassland heritage throughout
29 the state.

30 SEC. 2. Section 425.10 is added to the Government Code, to
31 read:

32 425.10. Purple needlegrass, or *Nassella pulchra*, is the official
33 state grass.